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May 5, 2009

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

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DEPUTY AGRICULTURE DIRECTOR WILL SUCCEED RETIRING ETCHEPARE

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - The deputy director of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture will succeed Director John Etchepare, who retires this month, Gov. Dave Freudenthal announced today.

Jason Fearneyhough, a Cheyenne native, has served as the department's deputy director since 2006. In that role, Fearneyhough has demonstrated that he has the skill set needed to manage the large, complex agency, the Governor said.

"Jason has some big shoes to fill," the Governor said. "But one of the great things about John Etchepare is his understanding of the need to foster the next generation of leaders in the state, and Jason has learned from one of the best. During his tenure, John has worked hard to foster relationships with the Game and Fish Department, and to work closely with the BLM and other federal land management agencies. Jason has shown the willingness and ability to continue this work and I look forward to seeing him grow in the job."

Fearneyhough said, "I'm incredibly honored to serve in this position both for the state of Wyoming and for an industry that I love. I think the department is going in a very good direction and I think the leadership of John Etchepare is the reason for that."

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture oversees the state veterinary services lab, consumer health services, commodity production oversight, state Weed and Pest districts, the Wyoming State Fair and other programs.

Fearneyhough earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural communications from the University of Wyoming and is currently working on his master's of business.

He has held multiple positions within the Department, starting as a technical services inspector in 1996 and later working as a livestock and commodities marketing specialist.

In 1998, he went to work for the Wyoming Business Council as the manager of the livestock and forage marketing program. In this role, he managed the coordination of market development, business development, promotion, growth and the expansion of sales for Wyoming livestock and agricultural products to international and domestic markets. He worked as an industry consultant, and helped increase exports of Wyoming livestock genetics by developing a marketplace and leading producers through the process of fulfilling the market.

In 2002, he moved to Evanston, and opened his own agricultural consulting business that implemented natural resources and public relations programs for the Department of Agriculture in western Wyoming. He also developed marketing and growth strategies for non-profits and private businesses, helping to build partnerships between non-profit groups, industry and government.

Fearneyhough returned to the Department of Agriculture in 2006 as deputy director. In this position, he managed agency policy, programs, and budget, and served as an advisor to the Director.

“I think my background gives me a solid understanding of both the business side of the industry and the natural resources side, and how they impact on agriculture.” Fearneyhough said.

He is Chairman of the Executive Board of the Future Business Leaders of America, an advisory board member of the Laramie County Community College Agriculture Department, and an ex officio member of the Wyoming Beef Council, the Wyoming Wheat Marketing Commission and the Wyoming Agriculture and Natural Resource Mediation Board. For nine years, Fearneyhough was superintendent of the Wyoming State Fair and Rodeo’s 4-H and FFA Beef show and has volunteered his time as an auctioneer at charity events for almost 20 years.

Fearneyhough is an active outdoorsman. He and his wife, Tina, live in Cheyenne with their two daughters Abby and Ellie.